

# Carida: Heavy Duty

## Planet Hoppers: September 2003

By [Cory Herndon](#)

Welcome to "Planet Hoppers," a new feature on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* website. Each month, we'll bring you a set of articles on a particular world in the *Star Wars* galaxy that a Gamemaster can use separately or as a linked series of events.

This month, we'll hit the books -- and the bunkers -- for an intense year of combat training at the Imperial Academy on Carida and meet a pair of especially distinguished students. Be sure to check back each week for the next installment!

### **Part 1: Weight Training**

In which a future TIE pilot transfers to the Carida Imperial Military Academy for her final year of study.

### **Part 2: Boot Camp**

In which the fourth-year cadets take part in combat exercises designed to cull the weak from the Emperor's forces.

### **Part 3: War Games**

In which cadets Davani and Brie take the new MT-ST out for a crawl in the mountains of Carida.

### **Part 4: Cadets Gone Wild**

In which cadets Davani and Brie have a wild night on a two-day pass before they graduate.

### **About the Author**

One-time *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* editor Cory J. Herndon is now a freelancer. Cory's work has appeared in *Amazing Stories*, *Duelist*, *TopDeck*, *Star Wars Gamer*, *Dragon*, and SCIFI.com. He has done additional design work on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook (primarily the Droids chapter), *The Dark Side Sourcebook* (creatures and archetypes), and the *Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game*. He is also the author of Volumes 5 and 6 of the **Magic: The Gathering Encyclopedia**. Cory's short story "Like Spider's Silk" appears in the *Secrets of Magic* Anthology. He asks that you please purchase a copy of it and the **D&D** novel *The Living Dead* for every room in your home. Cory is currently authoring original content for Xbox.com, writing the third book in an upcoming *Magic: The Gathering* novel trilogy, and continuing to design *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* material for the Wizards website.



# Part 1: Weight Training

*Compiled by Cory J. Herndon*

Though Carida, like Alderaan, eventually became one of the few worlds actually destroyed outright by one of the Emperor's superweapons (albeit at the hands of a disturbed Jedi apprentice), the planet maintained a peaceful existence within the Republic for thousands of years. A high gravity world populated by an intelligent species with a thriving mercantile economy, Carida exported little to the rest of the galaxy but raw minerals and a few local food stuffs, and the rest of the galaxy rarely stopped by longer than it took to load a freighter.

Two centuries before Palpatine's rise, the Republic Senate passed legislation mandating a central academy for centralized training of the many separate planetary defense forces that kept security on most worlds. The Caridans were happy to oblige the Republic with vast acreage upon which to build the new academy, which soon began turning out graduates that raised the quality of defense forces throughout the Republic. The planet's heavier-than-normal gravity provided the perfect crucible for trainees, who emerged from the new Republic Defense Academy stronger and far more experienced in all forms of combat, crowd control, and survival.

Once the galaxy erupted into full-scale chaos, first with the Clone Wars and then the Rebellion conflict, the Empire formally took control of the Carida academy. The rechristened Imperial Military Academy soon began churning out battle-hardened troops to replenish the voracious Imperial war machine.

**Planet:** Carida

**Planet Type:** Terrestrial

**Climate:** Temperate

**Terrain:** Forest, desert, glacier

**Atmosphere:** Breathable

**Gravity:** Heavy (1.98 Standard)

**Diameter:** 18,324 km

**Length of Day:** 25 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 357 local days

**Sentient Species:** Caridans, Humans

**Language:** Caridan, Basic

**Population:** 25 million

**Species Mix:** 75% Caridan, 23% Human, 2% droids

**Government:** Council of Merchants/Military administration

**Major Exports:** Military personnel, military technology, industrial equipment

**Major Imports:** Foodstuffs

**System/Star:** Caridan

Planets	Type	Moons
Andra	Molten rock	0
Bedara	Barren rock	0
Online	Methane seas	1
Carida	Terrestrial	2
Carida's Blade	Asteroid belt	-
Cari	Gas giant	14
Andinri	Gas giant	20
Carida's Helm	Frozen debris belt	-

Though Carida Academy soon gained a reputation as a "stormtrooper factory" during the Rebellion era, the Academy also expanded its officer training program, which ranked number one in the Empire at the time of Carida's destruction, and takes on part-time students for specialized combat studies.

No matter where you were destined to serve in the Empire's forces, odds are it required at least a semester on Carida -- as Cadet Myrette Davani, a future TIE Fighter pilot, learned when she transferred from flight school on Coruscant for a final year of study at the Academy. Davani transmitted the following message six months after the Battle of Yavin.

*This background file excerpt is reprinted with permission from the New Republic Intelligence Ongoing Investigation Division.*

# HoloNet Message Transcript

**Sent To:** Nils and Haryette Davani [Node ID: Beheboth-DavNH-3779G5003]

**Sent From:** Cadet Myrette Davani [Node ID: Carida-DavanM-8789753-J7Y5]

**Subject:** One Year to Go

Despite your direst predictions, Dad, I've safely piloted the personnel shuttle to Carida. My entire class made it in one piece, and I didn't even nick the paint. Think you can drop that formal protest with the Coruscanti Pilot Institute and Commandant Mogurk now? They chose me for the *honor* of flying the class here because my marks were so high. And because Shira refused. And that's fine. It's no shame to be second-best to Cadet Brie. She's the finest pilot I've ever seen behind the stick, and I'd say that even if I didn't know her so well. At first I suspected she'd refused so that I could have the job, but I don't think that's it. I don't think she's been getting much sleep.

And now, Carida. The final year of my training. The Academy. You know, the area around the main campus is a lot like home -- rocky, dry, mountains like dragon's teeth -- but coming into orbit, I saw green patches bigger than the Bothehl Desert. And oceans. Real oceans, not those anemic patches that dribble up from Emperor knows where on Coruscant. I have to admit I took the longest approach vector the regs allowed just to get a good long look at the polar regions. It's a wonder there's any water left to make it rain, but it does that too (right now, in fact).

Oh, and the gravity. It's as bad as you said, Dad. But I'm strong; if I wasn't, I wouldn't be here. Look at it this way - someday I'll come back to the farm, and I'll be able to do the work of ten binary load lifters.

I know you've gotten flack about your daughter running off to join the stormtroopers. You know it's really not going to be like that. But it's sure not going to be CPI, either. First, they'll run us through the same boot camp as the other new arrivals, and then the rest of the first two semesters is almost nothing but tactics, strategy, and survival, "in no particular order." (That was Mogurk's joke -- I'm going to miss that old crank.)

Personally, I reckon survival's going to be part of every course.

-- Myrette

## Part 2: Boot Camp

*Compiled by Cory J. Herndon*

Some of the best information available on life at the Imperial Academy on Carida comes from the New Republic's records on Imperial agent Shira Brie. This file is extensive, considering the lengths to which Darth Vader himself went to ensure that no one discovered Brie's identity while she was undercover. Much of the information on Brie -- recently discovered to be at large and operating under the name "Lumiya" -- came from an investigation carried out by Luke Skywalker in an effort to clear his name after he was falsely accused of murdering Vader's operative. But another source uncovered by spies monitoring the HoloNet includes messages from Imperial Cadet Myrette Davani, who was not only Brie's bunkmate but also her friend when the two attended pilot school and the Imperial Academy together. Alliance Intelligence originally declassified these messages for distribution to all personnel a few months before the Battle of Endor, when Brie was briefly believed deceased.

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**Sent From:** Cadet Myrette Davani [Node ID: Carida-DavanM-8789753-J7Y5]

**Subject:** What a Planet

Sorry it's taken me so long to write. Things have been -- well, not difficult, but definitely challenging. Don't worry, though: Brie is watching my back. These past two months, I've never seen such a change in a person. Maybe it's the gravity. Me, I'm just sore and have a headache that won't go away. Shira and I have been putting in extra hours in the simulator, and not just practicing flying. We've been trying out a new vehicle that's going to crawl all over Bantha Squad in the next war game, and I doubt anyone else on the field will be able to match us.

These first two months have been nothing like flight school on Coruscant. And that was strange enough for an Outer Rim girl like me. First, we went through boot camp with the first-year stormtrooper cadets. It's simply the hardest thing I've ever done, and I can only imagine what it's like to go through the full four-year program. I know you think she's a snob, Mom, but I don't know if I'd make it through this without Shira's help. I like to think she's getting the same support from me. I want to tell you about one time she helped me out of a tight jam.

It was during our third day of boot camp. And they really meant "camp" -- after a few days of brutal physical conditioning at the barracks, we'd been sent on a two-hundred-kilometer hike through a mountainous wasteland. We were each allowed regulation stormtrooper backpacks and fitted with training armor (stormtrooper cadets don't get fitted armor with all the trimmings until third year), and told we could pack as much extra weight as we liked.

It was Shira who pointed out what the instructors were trying to do. I had crammed my third extra water bottle into my pack when she asked me if I was crazy. Of course not, I told her, but we were going into a desert. If I had permission to take extra water, I had every intention of doing so.

"Are you scared?" Shira asked.

"No, just practical," I replied.

"That's where you're wrong, 'Rette," Shira said. "This isn't a test of our physical condition. We wouldn't be here if our bodies weren't up to the task. They're testing our spirit."

Shira first pointed out a small monitor next to the door of the barracks. The readout indicated the gravity in the Academy itself was artificially lowered -- not to standard, but certainly a half-step lower than Caridan normal.

"They're fooling us into thinking it's not as bad as it is. Making us focus on the wrong things," she said.

"The *only* thing we need to worry about is the gravity and getting to the end of the hike. The supplies will be enough." She held up her pack. "This is the same unit the sandtroopers use, probably even the ones on Beheboth. And you know how far those guys can range on foot. They want to see who's so intimidated by the task, so distrustful of the equipment, and so frightened they'll be left in the desert alone that they forget the most important factor."

"The weight," I said.

"You got it, Cadet Davani," she replied.

We were among twenty students, out of two hundred, who made it to the end of the hike. I got a little thirsty, and my legs still ache, but I made it, thanks to her help. Since then, I've made that trek twenty times, and never once failed to complete the journey.

-- Myrette

## Part 3: War Games

*Compiled by Cory J. Herndon*

At the Imperial Military Academy on Carida, all students received extensive training in ground combat, including the use and operation of both heavy war machines and light scout craft. (Starship pilots like cadets Davani and Brie also received hours of additional training in flight simulators). To test the abilities of Academy students, the faculty scheduled frequent war games that doubled as field tests for weapons research laboratories. This combination of experimentation and education led to more than a few "tragic battlefield accidents" over the years.

An incident midway through Davani's year of study on Carida provides a telling look into Imperial training techniques, and the effects that Darth Vader's personal instruction was beginning to have on cadet Shira Brie's psyche. Rebel Intelligence cryptographers reconstructed this information from the heavily censored original.

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**Sent From:** Cadet Myrette Davani [Node ID: Carida-DavanM-8789753-J7Y5]

**Subject:** The Toughest Day Yet

Hello! Your elusive daughter has found time for a short message. Training is becoming more intense than ever, but I'm still handling everything they've thrown at me. I'm getting a little concerned about Shira, though. Remember last letter I told you we'd been simming a new vehicle? We finally took them out into the field for this week's war games against Bantha squad.

We dropped into an area called "Tarkin's Teeth," a jagged stretch of dry mountain range about three hundred kilometers from the Academy. Desolate as hell and completely abandoned -- but then, it's been a war games range for a few hundred years. The new walkers were waiting for us when we landed (in an actual combat situation, they'd be sent in via their own drop pods, but in this case the prototypes were flown in by drop ship, too).

I have to admit the things looked a little creepy from the outside after spending so much time in the simulated cockpit. The official designation is the Mountain Terrain Scout Transport, but they look like giant, six-legged bugs. They're about as long as a good-size speeder, with room for one pilot and a tiny cargo hold that made me think these things would never be landed without heavier support. Our squad had them all up and running in under five minutes, and we crawled out into the Teeth to hunt down the Banthas. We knew they had to be within a few dozen kilometers, but other than that we were on our own.

Shira made first contact with the opposing squad. We'd each taken a long, looping recon route, the only two bug walkers to go out alone while the rest of our squad remained in pairs, guarding our assigned perimeter. I heard Shira transmit a single message -- "Found them, zone 3, eight targets, opening fire." -- and I immediately vectored toward her position. The MT-ST might look like a bug, but those six legs can pump pretty quickly, even at almost two gees.

Turns out she didn't really need my help. By the time I got there (in under two minutes, I'm happy to say) Shira had single-handedly decimated Bantha squad. Normally, this would have meant that the training lasers in her MT-ST had scored hits on her targets, and automated sensors would have shut the target vehicles down. But Shira's bug walker hadn't been equipped with training lasers. Her vehicle had been fully armed. She'd killed half a dozen of our fellow students and totaled twice as many MT-STs when I found her, and she was *laughing*.

I think she may have snapped. But no one in authority has done *anything* about it! Her charged weapons were blamed on "instructor error," the deaths have been "regrettable casualties," and Shira hasn't talked to me about the situation at all. In fact, she's behaving as if nothing strange happened, and no one else -- not even the survivors of Bantha squad -- seem that disturbed by any of it.

If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I'd be willing to let it go. But I think my friend Shira's got a darkness in her, and I'm going to keep a closer eye on her.

-- Myrette

## Game Notes: The "Bug Walker"

**Craft:** Mountain Terrain Scout Transport (MT-ST)

**Class:** Walker [ground]

**Size:** Huge (7.2 meters)

**Passengers:** 0

**Cargo Capacity:** 30 kilograms

**Speed:** 40 m

**Max Velocity:** 100 km/h

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Crew:** 1 driver, Skilled +4)

**Initiative:** +2 (-2 size, +4 crew)

**Maneuver:** +2 (-2 size, +4 crew)

**Defense:** 12 (-2 size, +4 armor)

**Shield Points:** 0

**Hull Points:** 50 (DR 5)

**Weapon:** Twin blaster cannon (fire-linked)\*; **Fire Arc:** Turret (full); **Attack Bonus:** +6 (-2 size, +4 crew, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10; **Range Increment:** 200 m.

## Part 4: Cadets Gone Wild

*Compiled by Cory J. Herndon*

Cadet Myrette Davani's last message home reflects a strong young woman about to step into a much larger galaxy, but still hoping to save a troubled friend in need. This message, like those before, has been reconstructed by Alliance Intelligence cryptographers for the Shira Brie intel file.

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**Sent From:** Cadet Myrette Davani [Node ID: Carida-DavanM-8789753-J7Y5]

**Subject:** Ladies' Night Out

One last message before I see you both at graduation. You are still coming, right? Be sure you get the discount rate I set up through the Academy!

I wanted to give you some idea what to expect when you get here. The Humans aren't so bad -- Humans are Humans, like they say -- but the Caridans can take a little getting used to. Dealing with a Caridan merchant is a lot like trading with a nomadic water-seller on Beheboth. You'll get what you pay for, but only just, and you'd better check your purchase for sand lice.

Shira still hasn't discussed the bug walker incident, and I've stopped pressing her. Nothing like it has happened since. She still spends a lot of time in "private tutoring" that she won't tell me about, though. Frankly, I think she's heading into intelligence. It would explain why more of a stink wasn't made about the accidental deaths of six students, and it would explain her mysterious private training, which always happens at night.

Yet in many ways, she's still the same woman I've known for years. Same sense of humor, same brilliant mind, and the same love of practical jokes. But that darkness inside her keeps growing. Earlier this week, we decided to use the two-day passes we'd earned for our consistent high scores and head into the Caridan district just outside the Academy. I'd hardly spent any time among the natives at all, and you know I've always found aliens of any kind fascinating, growing up where I did.

The district is wild, like Hebofyrd on festival night, but with five times the chaos. Caridan sidewalk merchants are everywhere, and the streets are really only suited to foot traffic (though that doesn't stop the rickshaw droids from tearing through the crowds). The first place we hit was a bit of a dive (after a while I learned they were *all* dives), but Shira talked the proprietor into two-for-one drinks and an hour at the dejarik table for free. I'm not really sure how she did it, but she made some pretty intense eye contact with the Caridan behind the bar, and I wasn't going to argue.

The night almost turned ugly about four dives into what was rapidly becoming an old-fashioned cantina crawl. A group of burly Caridans, big even for those guys, insisted on buying us a round. For some reason, this struck Shira as insanely funny, because she just stared the leader of the group down and said, "Not interested." And then, as I live and breathe, the Caridan froze solid for just a second, and *dropped dead on the spot*.

Shira just winked at me. I started to get up, but she waved me down with one hand while gesturing behind her with the other. The guy on the floor let out a low groan. So he wasn't dead. But somehow, she'd knocked him flat with a look and a wave.

Maybe she's not the same person after all.

Well, that took a grim turn! Sorry, I've been dwelling on Shira, and she's still not forthcoming with any information. But I look forward to seeing you so much. Be sure not to miss your transport, and Mom, remember to bring some of your harza cake!

-- Myrette



## Game Notes: Caridans

The natives of the planet Carida evolved in a high-gravity environment and have surprising physical strength considering their lanky frames. Their mercantile culture has adapted well to the continued presence of the Empire, and many Caridan-owned industries provide equipment and machinery for the Academy. They see the Empire not as an occupying force, but as a long-term customer. The Imperial policies against non-Humans became even harsher after the Battle of Yavin, however, and caused friction between the Empire and the Caridans for the first time.

Caridans average well over 2 meters in height, with long eyebrows and three-fingered hands. Their long, spindly looking legs are composed almost entirely of wiry muscle and end in two-toed, semihoofed feet. Few Caridans ever left their homeworld before its destruction, though a few traveling Caridan merchants may yet survive in the galaxy at large, and a few more survive within the ranks of the New Republic military.

## Species Traits

- Due to their planet's high gravity, Caridans have +6 to Strength and -6 to Dexterity.
- Caridans have Caridan and Basic as automatic languages.
- Caridans gain a +4 bonus to Appraise checks.
- Caridans gain a +2 bonus to Fortitude saves.

**Caridan Commoner:** Init -3; Defense 7 (-3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP -/10; Atk +3 melee (1d3+3, unarmed strike) or -3 ranged; SQ Species traits; SV Fort +2, Ref -3, Will -1; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 5, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Equipment:* Personal belongings.

*Skills:* Appraise +4, Knowledge (any one) +2, Profession (any one) +2, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Caridan, Speak Basic, Speak Caridan.